

## Message Text

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22

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-05 /069 W

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R 050958Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6834

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, EGEN, LA

SUBJECT: VIENTIANE COST OF LIVING

REF VIENTIANE 1792

1. PORK REAPPEARED IN THE VIENTIANE OPEN MARKET THIS WEEK FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE DECEMBER, 1975. EMBASSY MARKET SURVEY AUGUST 3 SHOWED PORK AVAILABLE AT 600 KIP PER KILO, WHICH MOST LAO CONSIDER EXORBITANT. NEVERTHELESS, TEN TO FIFTEEN PEOPLE WERE WAITING TO PURCHASE THE PORK WHEN SURVEY WAS MADE. WHEN EMBASSY LOCAL CONDUCTING MARKET SURVEY ASKED THOSE WAITING TO BUY PORK WHAT THE PRICE WAS, THEY WERE RELUCTANT TO DIVULGE IT, FEARING THE LOCAL MILITIA WHO PATROLE THE MARKET WOULD DISCOVER THAT PORK WAS SELLING FOR MORE THAN DOUBLE GOVERNMENT SET PRICE OF 250 KIP PER KILO. TWO RECENT GOVERNMENT ACTIONS COULD ACCOUNT FOR THE REAPPEARANCE OF PORK. FIRSTLY, THE GOVERNMENT MOVE TO ABOLISH CHECK-POINTS

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ON ROADS INTO VIENTIANE FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE APPARENTLY ALLOWS

FARMERS TO TRANSPORT PORK TO THE MORE LUCRATIVE CITY MARKET (REFTEL). EVIDENCE THAT THIS MEASURE IS INDEED IN EFFECT WAS OFFERED BY A LAO STUDENT WHO TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT HE PURCHASED PORK ON JULY 21 FOR 300 KIP PER KILO IN A TOWN 40 KILOMETERS FROM VIENTIANE AND TRANSPORTED IT TO CITY WITHOUT BEING STOPPED AT A SINGLE CHECK-POINT. SECONDLY, TEM DEJVONGSA, VICE CHAIRMAN FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE VIENTIANE MUNICIPALITY, IN AN ANNOUNCEMENT JULY 30 AUTHORIZED PEOPLE TO SLAUGHTER PIGS IN THEIR OWN DISTRICTS AND VILLAGES. NO LONGER OBLIGATED TO BUTCHER PIGS AT THE GOVERNMENT SLAUGHTER HOUSE AND SELL TO THE GOVERNMENT AT A SET PRICE, PRODUCERS FIND THEY CAN NOW SELL PORK AT THE BLACK MARKET PRICE IN THE PUBLIC MARKET. PORK HAS BEEN AVAILABLE IN PAST WITHIN VIENTIANE AT THE BLACK MARKET PRICE BUT ONLY TO FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS WHERE SLAUGHTER AND DISTRIBUTION COULD BE CONDUCTED ON A PRIVATE BASIS.

2. CHICKEN, NOT AVAILABLE JULY 20, REAPPEARED IN THE MARKET JULY 27 AT 1000 KIP, AND BY AUGUST 3 THE PRICE HAD FALLEN TO 650 KIP. FISH WAS UNAVAILABLE JULY 20 AND 27 BUT REAPPEARED AUGUST 3.

3. OTHER ELEMENTS OF DEJVONGSA'S ANNOUNCEMENT WERE NOT CORROBORATED BY EMBASSY'S MARKET SURVEY. WHEREAS HE CLAIMED FOOD PRICES WERE NOW CHEAPER, MARKET SURVEY REVEALED THE PRICE OF BOTH GLUTINOUS AND WHITE RICE INCREASED. FOR EXAMPLE, FIRST QUALITY WHITE RICE ROSE FROM 160 KIP PER KILO JULY 20 TO 180 KIP AUGUST 3, SECOND QUALITY FROM 140 TO 150, AND THIRD QUALITY FROM 90 TO 100. DEJVONGSA'S CLAIM THAT MORE BEEF, BUFFALO, AND DUCK WERE AVAILABLE IN THE MARKET WAS ALSO UNSUBSTANTIATED. BEEF AND BUFFALO HAVE BEEN UNAVAILABLE IN THE OPEN MARKET SINCE DECEMBER 1975. DUCK WAS UNAVAILABLE JULY 20, REAPPEARED JULY 27 FOR 1000 KIP AND DISAPPEARED AGAIN AUGUST 3. CORCORAN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** COST OF LIVING, MEATS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760301-1336  
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**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 VIENTIANE 1792  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
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**Review Date:** 20 APR 2004  
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